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THE CRITICAL SOCIAL SITUATION IN AFRICA

Annex to the 1989 Report on the
World Social Situation

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I. INTRODUCTION

1. The first decade and a half of African independence to the mid-1970s had seen considerable progress towards the attainment of fundamental human goals and social integration. Visible improvements had been made in education, literacy, health, employment and provision of housing, clean drinking water and other social amenities for large numbers of African people. A new sense of national pride and cultural identity had emerged among the diverse populations which had been grouped under colonial aegis into the new nation States.

2. Unfortunately, most of these social gains were either lost or became seriously eroded in the 1980s. The unprecedented crisis which has confronted the African countries in this decade has thrown their economies into disarray and caused widespread deterioration in the social conditions of the people. The improvements in human capital stock have been severely undercut by decelerating education, hunger, malnutrition and famine, the resurgence of endemic diseases, drought and environmental degradation. Apartheid and acts of violence committed by the racist regime in South Africa as well as other regional political conflicts have eroded human rights and made millions of people refugees. Furthermore, a hostile international economic environment has continued to undermine the ability of African Governments to sustain the development of the region. Certain measures taken by the Governments, with the support of international financial and economic institutions, to stabilize and adjust their economies have mainly served to aggravate the social crisis. As a result, large segments of the African population who were already disadvantaged, including women, children, smallfarmers and poor rural and urban wage workers, have suffered real misery.

3. Under such circumstances, the African Governments' initial efforts to implement the objectives of the Declaration on Social Progress and Development 1/ have met with serious obstacles in recent years. It was against this background that the Conference of Ministers responsible for economic planning and development of the Economic Commission of Africa (ECA) adopted resolution 601(XXII) of 24 April 1987 and the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) of the United Nations adopted resolution 1987/39 on 28 May 1987 focusing regional and international attention on the critical social situation in Africa and calling for its study. Pursuant to the ECA resolution, a detailed report was submitted on the African social situation 2/ to the twenty-third session of the Commission and fourteenth meeting of the ECA Conference of Ministers held at Niamey, Niger, in April 1988.

4. This present report has been prepared by the secretariat of the ECA as an Annex to the 1989 Report on the World Social Situation, pursuant to the above-cited resolution of the ECOSOC. It reviews and analyses in sections II through V the trends in economic crisis and social deterioration as manifested

particularly in the areas of employment, incomes, food and nutrition, health and education. Section VI analyses the pervasive social effects of apartheid and destabilization perpetrated by the Pretoria regime on the peoples and States of Southern Africa and of other regional conflicts. Section VII draws the major conclusions from the preceding analyses and indicates the important new directions for efforts towards sustained social progress and human-focused development in Africa.

The citation of cases from specific countries is meant to be indicative rather than comprehensive.

II. BACKGROUND TO AFRICA'S SOCIAL DETERIORATION

1. Structural Economic Imbalances

5. It is now well established that the root causes of the economic and social crisis in Africa lie primarily in the structural imbalances and weaknesses of the African economy. This was clearly pointed out in 1980 in the Lagos Plan of Action for the Implementation of the Monrovia Strategy for the Economic, Social and Cultural Development of Africa 3/. It was reiterated in 1986 in Africa's Submission to the Special Session of the United Nations General Assembly on Africa's Economic and Social Crisis. 4/ A major feature of the structural problems is the extroverted nature of production which is dominated by export-oriented agricultural, mining and other extractive commodities.

6. Although agriculture acounts for 60 to 80 per cent of gross domestic product (GDP) and provides the livelihood of more than 75 per cent of the population, its food sector is characterized by rudimentary production techniques, poor conservation and processing technologies, insufficient price incentives and inadequate marketing and other basic social and economic infrastructures. At the height of the crisis, African Government leaders acknowledged that "in spite of the recent shift of emphasis in favour of food production, research and extension services and direct investment as well as basic infrastructure in this critical sector still lag behind the attention given to export crops; and the linkages among the economic and social sectors are still so weak that many African countries do not as yet enjoy the mutually supportive sectoral interactions that are essential for building dynamic, self-reliant and self-sustaining economies." 5/

7. The African economies are heavily dependent on external sources both for major factor inputs for development, such as capital, equipment and expertise, and for major revenues derived from exports. This has made both economic growth and consumption in the continent greatly subject to the vagaries of the international economic and socio-political environment. When faced with world economic recession in 1980-1982 and an unprecedented drought emergency from 1983 to 1985, the structurally weak and misoriented economies, which admittedly also suffered from poor management, succumbed to a major crisis with preciptous declines in the living standards of the people. The situation has continued in varying degrees to the present. Economic growth rapidly decelerated from the 1970s when GDP averaged 3.3 per cent growth per year to only 1 per cent in 1986 and 0.8 per cent in 1987. Agriculture expanded by 3.8 per cent in 1986 largely due to good rains but declined by 1.1 per cent in 1987 reflecting recurrent drought in several parts of the continent. Growth in industry has equally been weak or marginal due mainly to the under-utilization of installed capacity which in some countries is as high as 50 per cent 6/.

8. The poor economic growth has resulted in serious declines in per capita income which fell by an annual average rate of 3.4 per cent between 1980 and 1986. This meant that average income per head was between 15 and 25 per cent lower than in 1970. Per capita consumption also fell by as much as 14 per cent in the 1980-1987 period. 1/ A sharp rise in inflation and shortages of essential goods and services pushed prices up beyond the reach of most workers. Thus, while real wages declined by an average of 19 per cent between 1980 and 1986, prices increased on the average by 18.9 per cent in 1982-1983, 24 per cent in 1984 and 11.7 per cent in 1985. The results have been an intolerable reduction in living standards and a serious social retrogression in nearly all countries.

9. The contraction of the African economies in the 1980s was aggravated by an interrelated set of external factors, particularly the collapse in commodity prices, debt and debt-servicing burdens and diminishing resource flows. Most African countries depend on not more than three main export commodities for their foreign exchange earnings. Between 1980 and 1983 the region lost some $13.5 billion, a figure which rose to $19 billion in 1986, as a result of the sharp falls in the export prices of its primary commodities. In actual earnings, Africa's non-oil commodity exports acquired only $24 billion, about 20 per cent less than in 1985. At the same time, the external debt of the region had risen from $150 billion in 1983 to $218 billion in 1987. The ratio of debt servicing as a percentage of exports has been high and growing. It reached 35.8 per cent in 1987 when 10 per cent or less is considered a healthy benchmark. Meanwhile, resource flows to support Africa's development efforts decreased from $21.2 billion in 1982 to $18 billion in 1986, that is, less than the amount required to offset the sharp fall in export earnings in that year.

10. In order to manage these imbalances, most African Governments adopted measures largely to reduce government expenditure and control imports. The reductions in expenditure fell mainly on the development budgets and the social sectors. Since the Government is the largest formal employer as well as the major financier of social development services in most countries, the curtailment of public spending had particularly deleterious effects on the lives of the poor and vulneralbe, as will be seen in sections III-V below. It should be noted here that the social sectors bore the brunt of the retrenchment in expenditures largely because of a persisting misconception that social development is only a residual resource-consuming sector whose activities must await the generation of funds and resources by the "economic and productive sectors" 2/ There is an imperative need to change this perception if the human factor is to play its essential and central role in sustainable development in Africa. A change of perception is also necessary because of the compelling environmental and demographic dimensions of the crisis.

2. The environmental and demographic dimensions

11. In 1983-1985 Africa's structural underdevelopment and mounting debt received a jolt from the drought and associated desertification that ravaged all parts of the continental mainland. The island countries of the Indian Ocean region were also damaged by cyclones or floods caused by excessive rainfall. While these are age-old natural calamities, the intensity and widespread nature made them the worst in the region's history and they undercut the natural foundations of existence for millions of people. In 1983 alone, the Sahara desert was estimated to have advanced 150 kilometres southward. Usable pastoral land in arid and semi-arid zones were reduced by some 25 per cent and rampant bush fires destroyed other vegetation. In the West African Sahel and other affected regions, desertification is reducing other useful lands at the rate of 8-10 kilometres per year. Forests have virtually disappeared in some countries. The Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) estimates that deforestation exceeds tree planting rates by a factor of 30:1 in several least developed African countries (LDCs). Livestock was decimated from 30 to 80 per cent in many poor countries and food production shortfalls especially in cereals were as high as 30 to 50 per cent.

12. The toll on human lives of the great drought emergency has been well reported and therefore only a brief reference needs to be made here. More than one million people from mostly agricultural and pastoral communities lost their lives. Some 250 million people were seriously affected, and nearly 40 million of them faced severe famine, malnutrition, debilitating diseases and epidemics. Over ten million people were displaced from their lands and homes and had to cross the boundaries of neighbouring countries with their emaciated livestock in search of food and water. The social fabric of African society was rent further as the refugee population swelled to over 5 million or half the world's total. Rural areas with chronic poverty and inadequate developmental support and poor peri-urban areas bore the brunt of the socio-economic dislocations. Nor have the conditions improved since localized droughts have re-emerged in several countries and swarms of locusts and other pests have destroyed millions of hectares of new crops and renewed Africa's food deficit situation. 9/

13. Another major factor that has aggravated the deteriorating socio-economic situation is the demographic factor. As is well known, Africa is the least densely populated continent in the world and is also underpopulated overall. Therefore, the significance of the demographic dimension for the current crisis and future development lies not in the gross numbers of the people but in the rate of growth and patterns of distribution of the population relative to present levels of development resources, technology and productivity. As Table 1 shows, the population is growing at a current rate of 3 per cent per annum and has had a high growth profile since the 1950s, compared to the rest of the world. In 1950 the region's population stood at 224 million. In

1989 it will be an estimated 628 million or an increase of 180 per cent. Since no downward trends are expected in the growth rate, the population is expected to reach 872 million by the turn of the century.

Table 1: Major demographic indicators in Africa in comparison with the world, more developed and less developed regions, 1950-1990

Regions	Annual Population Growth rate (percentage)		Crude Birth Rate (per 1000 popn.)	
	1950-1955	1985-1990	1950-1955	1985-1990
Eastern Africa	2.26	3.09	50.3	47.8
Middle Africa	1.89	2.91	46.6	44.8
Northern Africa	2.26	2.73	48.9	38.0
Southern Africa	2.28	2.33	43.7	33.4
Western Africa	2.13	3.26	49.7	48.9
Total Africa	2.18	3.00	48.9	44.7
World	1.80	1.73	37.4	27.1
More developed Regions	1.28	0.53	22.6	14.6
Less developed regions	2.05	2.10	44.6	30.9

Table 1 (continued)

Regions	Crude death rate (per 1000 population)		Infant mortality rate (per 1000 live births		Life expectancy (in years for both sexes)	
	1950-55	1985-90	1950-55	1985-90	1950-55	1985-90
E. Africa	28.2	17.0	179	116	36.5	49.8
Mid. Africa	27.6	16.0	183	107	36.9	50.0
N. Africa	24.7	10.7	189	86	41.9	59.0
S. Africa	21.0	10.1	153	77	44.1	59.7
W. Africa	28.9	16.5	204	112	35.6	49.4
Tot. Africa	27.0	14.9	187	106	38.0	51.9
World	19.7	9.9	155	71	45.9	61.5
More developed region	10.1	9.8	56	15	65.7	73.4
Less developed regions	24.3	9.9	180	79	41.0	59.7

Source: United Nations, World Population Prospects, 1988 Assessments Medium Variant (computer print-outs).

14. Although there are slight subregional variations in the growth rates, the age distribution for the whole region is characterized by high child dependency. The 1987 United Nations Monitoring Report on the World Population Trends and Policies 10/

shows the African child population, that is aged 0-14 years, to constitute 45 per cent of the total population and the elderly, 60 years and over, to be 4.8 per cent. Africa has the highest age dependency ratio of 92.9 per cent, compared to 64.7 per cent for the world, 69.9 per cent for the less developed regions and 50.2 per cent for the more developed regions. The implications for Africa are serious in terms of the high demand for subsistence consumption and provision of social services, particularly educational and health facilities. The high dependency could also exert a negative pressure on the capacity of the economically active population to save and invest in productive enterprises. The demographic profile and dynamics also have consequences for employment. In sub-Saharan Africa in the 1980s the labour force has been expanding at a rate of 2.7 per cent per annum compared to 2.2 per cent in the 1960s. Four million new jobs were estimated to be required in 1988 alone but these were not possible to create. On the contrary, unemployment, underemployment and labour displacements have been rife. 11/

15. The worsening social conditions have been felt in varying degrees by different segments of the population whose spatial distribution had traditionally been uneven. Over 75 per cent of the African population currently lives in the rural areas from where unequal development patterns, ecological disasters and lack of opportunities have been forcing the rural young and able-bodied to flee in large numbers to the urban areas and even out of their countries. Although the continent is the least urbanized region of the world, the current urbanization rate of 5 to 10 per cent is considered too high since the growth is not in response to an expanding urban economy or employment demand. The results have been overcrowded cities and towns with overburdened social amenities and depressed labour markets. On the other hand, the rural areas have been left with predominantly young and aging males and overworked women to maintain the food production systems and strained social structures. For these and other reasons, an increasing number of countries are pursing comprehensive population policies and programmes as part of their efforts at recovery and long-term development, in line with the 1984 Kilimanjaro Programme of Action for African Population and Self-Reliant Development. 12/ However, other aspects of the demographic dimension remain. They relate to the millions of the conflict and war displaced populations and refugees whose disrupted lives reflect the socio-political malaise of the continent. (see Section VI below)

3. The Impact of Stabilization and Structural Adjustment Programmes

16. The sharp economic decline and severe socio-economic imbalances necessitated some forms of adjustment and corrective measures in nearly all African countries. However, the aspects of the problem that attracted immediate and greatest attention were those associated with the external economic position of the countries, especially their balance of payments, currency

exchange rates, exports and imports. By 1987 some 34 African countries had undertaken various combinations of austerity and reform measures under financial "stabilization" and macro-economic "structural adjustment" programmes. While few countries, notably Nigeria, undertook some of these measures on their own, the majority of African countries adopted wide-ranging stabilization and adjustment programmes under the influence of the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the World Bank. The ultimate goal of these programmes was seen as the restoration of conditions favourable for sustainable economic growth. However, their dominant feature has been an intense, short-term focus on achieving quick external financial liquidity and recovery of export capacity in the countries.

17. Much detailed study is required to asses the full impact of structural adjustment programmes in Africa. But the available data and emerging evidence strongly indicate that the effects on the well-being of the people have been devastating especially with regard to employment, incomes, food, nutrition, health and education. A fundamental problem of the IMF and World Bank programmes has been the highly sectoral and narrowly economic approach both in the analysis of the development malfunctions and in the prescriptions of solutions. Such approach is inadequate to deal with the crisis in Africa which is multidimensional and seriously aggravated by endogenous and exogenous factors. What need to be restructured in Africa are the basic patterns and relations of production, distribution and consumption in their technical, economic, social, political, external and internal dimensions. The overall perspective must be long-term and transformational and not merely short-term surgical macro-economic operations to restore the economies to their extroverted and dependent pre-crisis state.

18. The IMF and World Bank supported stabilization and adjustment programmes in the early 1980s paid scant attention to the social, political and human aspects of the development crisis. The approach was the classic derivative one whereby economic growth was supposed to lead to social improvements and progress, after some span of time. The economic hardships and social dislocations of the most vulnerable social groups were assumed to be unavoidable, short-term and transitional. It is significant that in nearly all countries structural adjustment programmes were designed and managed as specialist activities of ministries of finance and economic planning, supported by large teams of foreign experts. Where social sector ministries were involved, their role was minimal and did not change the dominant economic perspectives. Accordingly, the success of the programmes was to be judged by economic criteria dominated by such elements as growth of GDP and exports, balance of payments, rate of inflation, public sector deficit as a percentage of GDP, and "realistic" exchange rates for local currencies. To meet these performance criteria, more or less standard packages of measures were instituted comprising, inter alia: cuts in public investment and government expenditure, freezes or limits on public employment

and wages, removal of subsidies on consumer goods especially food and fuel, cost recovery for social services, export promotion through input and incentive provisions, trade and capital liberalization, devaluation and price de-controls. A crucial enabling factor for good performance was understood to be the substantial inflows of foreign assistance and aid, which paradoxically were fraught with conditionalities and unreformed disbursement problems.

19. The disquieting record so far shows that in nearly all cases, but more especially in the African LDCs, 13/ economic disequilibria have been aggravated and social regression and human misery exacerbated. For example, expansion in exports has been achieved at the expense of food production which is the means of livelihood of the vast majority of small farmers, particularly women. The adjustment drive has reinforced the existing agricultural dualism since imported inputs, infrastructural rehabilitation and producer price incentives have been export-oriented and have benefitted mostly wealthy commercial farmers. 14/ Thus, structural adjustment has not only side-stepped the problem of alleviating rural poverty; it has also made the attainment of Africa's priority goal of food self-sufficiency even more illusory.

20. The plight of the poorer populations has worsened. Their health and nutritional status have been particularly jeopardized by the removal of Government subsidies on imported food and the introduction of cost recovery for health care. The dramatic price increases in food, fuel and essential household commodities also hit the low-income earners the hardest. In many cases the timing and sequencing of the measures were poor and the political costs have been manifested in food riots, labour strikes, students revolts and social unrests in several countries including Algeria, Ghana, Nigeria, Senegal, Sierra Leone, Sudan, Tunisia and Zambia. Other serious effects have resulted from the freeze in wages and employment and the retrenchment of the labour force in the civil services and parastatal organizations. While the gross numbers of retrenched workers appears relatively small in some countries, in most cases the numbers are very substantial. The retrenchment measures were deemed necessary to tackle a fundamental problem of over-manning in the public sector; but their impact must be viewed in other respects. Since Government in Africa is the major employer in the formal sector and the informal sector has not received the necessary support for dynamic growth and reorganization, the public sector retrenchment exercises have created something of a crisis of confidence in the State as an efficient manager of the economy. Also, for the labour force growing at an annual rate of 2.7 per cent, the freeze and retrenchmert have meant the loss of hundreds of thousands of job opportunities. Furthermore, since the "excess" employees removed from Government payrolls were mostly of the lower echelons, they were the the least equipped to find alternative employment. Consequently, in their tens of thousands, they have added to the growing crisis of unemployment and

underemployment mainly in the urban areas. The seriousness of the situation has forced many countries including Benin, Ghana, Guinea, Mali, Niger and Senegal to establish crash retraining programmes within their compensatory schemes for retrenched workers. However, available evidence indicates that the success of these compensatory measures have been limited and have not been cost-effective. 15/

21. The structural adjustment programmes have created a dilemma and a vicious circle. Where some measure of economic growth has been achieved, the countries have become even more indebted and dependent on external financial resources and less capable of delivering to the people the social benefits assumed to be derived from that growth. This is why there has been a distinct shift of the financial burden of important basic needs from the public to the private domain and to families, whether they could afford it or not. The financial resource problems of the countries have been aggravated by the inhospitable trading environment in the 1980s, the weak and declining prices of Africa's principal export commodities such as cocoa, coffee, tea, copper and phosphates, and by the inadequate capital flows. The cumulative impact of these adverse global conditions has been more devastating in Africa than in any other developing region. 16/ In June 1988 the IMF reported that the ratio of debt to exports of goods and services had deteriorated from 93.6 per cent in 1980 to 330.1 per cent in 1986 and 355.4 per cent in 1987. Some African LDCs including Guinea-Bissau, Mozambique, Somalia and Sudan had ratios over 1000 per cent. Under such circumstances it was little wonder that only 12 out of 44 sub-Saharan African countries could service their debt as scheduled between 1980 and 1987. According to the Fund, the current scheduled debt service for 1988-1989 is $21.4 billion a year, more than twice as much as the actual debt service payments African countries could make in 1986 or 1987. If the current scheduled debt service could be paid it would consume nearly 55 per cent of export earnings. 17/ Commenting on the intolerable situation, the Assembly of Heads of State and Government of the Organization of African Unity (OAU) declared in December 1987 that "the excruciating debt service burden is depriving our economies of resources needed not only for development but also in many countries for the survival of our peoples." 18/

22. The cases of Senegal and Ghana, which have had long and widely acclaimed experiences with structural adjustment, may be cited here to illustrate the complex problems of the policies and their impacts. In Senegal adjustment efforts began in 1979 but showed uneven progress until a new Medium and Long-term Adjustment Programme (PAML) was launched for 1985-1992. By May 1988 the IMF was extolling the progress in the country's growth, measured by positive economic indicators, in GDP, domestic savings budget and fiscal deficit, and "a strengthening of its external payments position." 19/ Exogenous conditions were then favourable. Good rains in the drought-prone country in 1985/1986 and 1987/1988 produced bumper harvests in groundnuts, Senegal's

second largest export commodity. Also substantial aid flows including a World Bank Consultative Group pledge of $1.8 billion for three fiscal years, 1987/1988-1989/1990, met one of the major prerequisites for adjustment success. In spite of these favourable conditions, Senegal faced the daunting challenges of severe slumps in groundnut and phosphate prices and a debt service obligation which was well over 40 per cent of its total recurrent revenue. Social sector "adjustments" were not made a coherent part of the PAML. As a result, the removal of suosidies on rice, an urban staple, the freeze of civil service salaries, liquidation of parastatals and employment reduction involving over 12,000 redundancies in a country whose labour force increases annually by 100,000 people, substantial cuts in health and education budgets and accompanying cost recovery schemes cumulatively produced very serious social and political difficulties and strains in the body politic which have not been fully resolved.

23. In Ghana, "adjustment with growth" had been possible with an energetic promotion of cocoa and gold production and a large infusion of adjustment aid. After the first phase of the Economic Recovery Programme (ERP) from 1983 to 1986, multilateral and bilateral aid commitments rose from $391 million in 1986 to $747 million in 1987. Real GDP growth of over 5 per cent exceeded population growth, exports and imports improved in volume and debt service payments were virtually up to date by the end of 1987. However, the country's external debt has almost doubled since 1983, the debt service ratio has risen to 63 per cent and as much as 27 per cent of the earnings from exports of goods and services in 1987 went to service the debt due to the IMF alone. 20/ The Government acknowledged that the benefits of adjustment had been seriously undermined by the sharp decline in cocoa prices and the social costs in the meantime were considerable. The imbalance between food and export production has been aggravated, inflation has reached 39 per cent, and devaluation, price increases and removal of subsidies have wiped out any meaningful relationship between the minimum wage and a worker's command over basic food and services. The unemployment and underemployment situation in the urban areas has been complicated by the ongoing and planned retrenchment of over 30,000 employees from the civil service and parastatals. Malnutrition, educational deterioration and social malaise were at their worst by 1985. This is why the Government, with the assistance of the World Bank and other donor agencies, adopted the Programme of Actions to Mitigate the Social Consequences of Adjustment (PAMSCAD) in 1987 to deal with the dramatic social fallout. The PAMSCAD is innovative and its adoption was timely. However, its scope is limited in the light of the tremendous social challanges.

III. THE CRISIS IN EMPLOYMENT, INCOMES AND POVERTY

1. Employment

24. Data on employment, incomes, poverty and other social conditions in Africa, as in other developing regions, are fragmentary and subject to variations of definition. Also, most available data are not sufficiently disaggregated to unmask the qualitative dimensions, scope and intensity of variables as they affect different socio-economic groups. Nonetheless, careful analysis of the available data clearly reveals sharply deteriorating trends in productive employment in the region. Table 2 shows the falling refined activity rates for all subregions from 1981 to 1987. Whereas total employment was estimated to have increased by 2.0 per cent per year in the 1970s in sub-Saharan Africa, it stagnated in the 1980s and the overall employment situation worsened by some 16 per cent between 1980 and 1987. 21/ Given the existing structural adjustment impetus, the unfavourable external economic environment and the difficulties of fundamental social changes in the areas of population, income and resource distribution between the urban and rural areas and the rich and the poor, the employment prospects look bleak indeed.

Table 2: Economically active population and refined activity rate - both sexes (1981-1987)

	Economically active population (in '000s)		Refined Activity rate (percentage)		
	Both sexes		Both sexes		
Subregions	1981	1987	1981	1984	1987
North Africa	31 191	37 209	39.90	41.10	40.20
West Africa	62 779	71 256	63.35	61.70	60.25
Central Africa	24 224	27 653	64.85	62.25	61.25
East and southern Africa	67 158	78 192	69.30	68.05	67.00
Total Africa a/	185	214	59.25	58.40	57.55

Source: ECA Statistical Data Base.

a/ Total economically active population for Africa in millions.

25. The impact of the contracting economy has been felt most severely by workers in agriculture and the manufacturing and construction industries. The serious decline in agriculture, due particularly to the longstanding neglect of small farmers, especially women in the food sector, and the inadequate policies to promote rural industries and non-farm development activities have

made the rural areas the fountain-head of Africa's employment problems. At the same time, industry has not been re-oriented to labour-intensive strategies to absorb more of the rapidly growing workforce. In fact, as industry is currently operating only at about half the installed capacity, it has tied up sizeable scarce national resources in most countries without generating further employment opportunities. Together with the cutbacks in development investment, these circumstances cost the African region an estimated 1.5 million new permanent jobs per annum from 1985 to 1987, while the employment freezes eliminated hundreds of thousands of job opportunities. The retrenchment of workers added to the already precarious situation by rendering some 3 million people unemployed in the same period. 22/ The scale of the layoffs by 1987 ranged from 12,000 and 30,000 in the public sectors in the LDC countries of Senegal and Guinea, respectively, to over 80,000 and 1.1 million, respectively, in Ghana and Nigeria.

26. Some estimates show that open and disguised unemployment increased by some 8 per cent between 1980 and 1985. Urban unemployment rates increased from 10 per cent in the 1970s to some 30 per cent in the mid-1980s with some of the highest rates found in African LDCs such as Burkina Faso, Ethiopia, Guinea, Niger, Senegal, Sierra Leone, Somalia and Togo. The rising unemployment rates in the face of a labour force growing at the rate of 2.7 per annum means that the absolute number of unemployed and underemployed persons in the region is expanding at an alarming rate. Thus, the ECA secretariat has estimated that the number of openly unemployed persons rose from 9.7 million in 1983 to 22 million in 1985 or nearly 40 per cent of the labour force. The underemployed increased from 63.6 million to 95 million in the same period. 23/

27. The social profiles and characteristics of the unemployed population are extremely important for the future development of the African region. Available data indicate that between 65 and 75 per cent of the unemployed are young people, aged 15-24 years, although they constitute only 30 per cent of the total population. Their unemployment rate averages three times that of adults. A major question is whether the African youth will be an engine of growth or a perennial burden on development? Women also constitute a very significant group within the unemployed. The economic crisis and heavy male migration out of the rural areas and the continent have forced many African women to seek employment in the services and industries as well as the traditional informal sector. Despite existing methodological deficiencies in properly classfying women's work, there is growing evidence of increased female labour force participation rates in the modern sector. However, time allocation studies are only in their infancy in Africa and so there is a lack of useful indicators of women's work burdens. But one recent study in Cote d'Ivoire is instructive. It shows that in the agricultural sector, women undertake 67 per cent of all the work done by the combined male and female population above the age of 10. "A girl

of 10-14 works as much as a man of 20-25, and a woman of 25-30 works a third longer than a man the same age." 24/ Yet women are left out in agricultural policy making and the increasing attention given to export agriculture in adjustment policies have only added to their work burden's and impoverishment in the food sector. As the employment markets became tighter and more precarious under the crisis and adjustment, women faced serious job discrimination. ILO/JASPA studies show that women have at least twice as many chances of being laid off and unemployed as men in the formal sector. 25/ The studies also show that the high and growing female unemployment rates extend well beyond the limit of 25 years while male unemployment has remained a predominantly youth phenomenon. This has serious implications for women as mothers, home makers and, increasingly, as managers of the rural household economy.

28. Another important feature of the unemployment problem is that it is affecting educated Africans more and more, thus destroying the human capital gains made at great financial and social costs by Governments and families. The poor match between the output of the educational systems and the manpower demand in the shrinking economy had resulted in 4 to 5 million jobless educated persons in the region by 1987. A disturbing trend in several countries is that the unemployment rate for the educated tends to be higher than - in some instances twice as high as - the rate for the workforce without formal education. 26/ For example, a tracer study of graduates in Nigeria in 1986 found that only 58 per cent had secured full-time jobs 18 months after they had completed their mandatory national youth service. A high degree of underemployment and job dissatisfaction was also noted: 30 per cent of the graduates found their education irrelevant for their jobs and 60 per cent expressed dissatisfaction with what they were doing. 27/ It is evident that budgetary constraints are forcing many Governments to abandon the hitherto virtual guarantee of public employment for graduates.

29. Paradoxically, several countries in which graduate unemployment has become a costly social problem rely heavily on even more costly expatriate manpower in many sectors of their economies. For instance, it is estimated that a minimum of 80,000 resident non-national technical assistance personnel are currently working in public and parastatal sectors of 40 sub-Saharan African countries at an annual cost of at least $4.0 billion. Some 10,000 of these are employed in the agriculture sector alone. 28/ Such contradictory trends are a function both of poor human resources planning, development and utilization policies in African countries and of the conditionalities and interests of donor assistance. Some of the unsalutary consequences are the eroded morale, motivation and efficiency of the qualified and experienced Africans. Their working conditions in many cases are appalling with respect to the means to perform their tasks and the remuneration they receive. This is particularly true of agricultural scientists, engineers, medical doctors and secondary and higher level teachers who face severe shortages in tools,

equipment, books, materials and transport. With regard to their incomes, the catastrophic drop in real wages between 1980 and 1984 in the face of sharp price increases which reached as high as 24 per cent meant that the real value of the monthly salary, for example, of a university professor in Sierra Leone was equivalent to $66, a doctor in Ghana to $42 and a permanent secretary in Uganda to $40 in 1984. 29/

30. A major consequence of the above situation has been the intensification of the brain-drain from Africa. An estimated 70,000 middle and high-level skilled and professional Africans are now working in Europe, North America and West Asia. More than 30,000 of them left the continent between 1984 and 1987. A substantial number of trained personnel also sought employment in other African countries. On the other hand, most men and women who could not emigrate recoursed to the informal sector within their countries. Thus, very many civil servants, teachers, nurses and other public servants were found trying to meet their basic needs by undertaking secondary micro-enterprises even during official working hours or else practising a certain amount of their professions for their own account. Low-income families were forced to withdraw children from school to support additional income-generating activities, thus threatening serious social problems of child labour.

31. In a region where formal social security protection is very limited and somewhat foreign in its orientation, 30/ a great deal of human suffering was mitigated during the crisis by time-honoured traditions of family and community solidarity. In some countries such as Egypt, Somalia and Sudan remittances from migrant workers provided a safety net and helped to maintain family welfare in the villages. Such support seemed to have come more from lower-income and lesser skilled migrants than from the higher profesionals, as a 1985 study in Sudan showed. 31/ At the same time, African households, and particularly the women within them, showed a great deal of resilience and resourcefulness. Their heavy recourse to informal sector employment created some 6 million jobs between 1980 and 1985 while the modern sector created only 0.5 million new jobs. 32/ The sector engaged relatively more women than the modern sector and they provided essential distributive services in trade as well as food preparation, over and above their household and child caring tasks. However, there can be no romanticization about the informal sector as a "cushion" for women and the poor. Work in the sector is tedious and is often undertaken in unsafe and unsanitary conditions. Productivity and incomes from the over-crowded micro-enterprises are also low. In the final analysis, when neither the formal nor the informal sectors were able to meet the employment and income needs of families and individuals, frustration, idleness and poverty led to social disorders. Although hard data and statistics are inadequate or poorly reported, there are real indications that crime, corruption, juvenile delinquency, youth disorientation, drug trafficking and social violence are assuming widening proportions in many countries. The informal system of

social security has become strained, family life has been disrupted by the heavy migrations and women heading 30 to 50 per cent of households, especially in the rural areas, have become more overburdened with managing family survival.

32. Owing to the multiple social consequences of the employment crisis, several countries have taken steps to strengthen their labour-servicing institutions, enhance the capacity of the informal sector for self-employment and promote a more effective participation of women and the youth in national development. Most countries now have machineries to promote the advancement of women and youth although many have too limited resources to be effective. In 1982 Kenya appointed a Presidential Committee on Unemployment and established a National Employment Bureau in 1987. The United Republic of Tanzania passed a Human Resources Development Act in 1983 and established a scheme to promote productive employment in rural and urban areas. Cote d'Ivoire has placed special emphasis on informal sector development within a new National Employment Policy declared for the decade 1985-1995. Ghana's Programme of Actions to Mitigate the Social Costs of Adjustment of 1987 incorporates job training and placement for some 3,000 of the retrenched public workers as well as labour-intensive public works programmes, credit and income-generating schemes for women and small-scale enterpreneurs in disadvantaged areas. Nigeria has established a new Directorate of Employment with a National Open Apprenticeship Programme. The Programme reached some 100,000 school-leavers in 1987/1988 with training and support services for self-employment. Related programmes in public works, afforestation and agriculture are also creating employment opportunities for the youth. However, it must be noted that remedial programmes can only have limited impact. The fundamental challenge lies in eradicating poverty and socio-economic inequalities, especially in the rural areas which are the main source of the unemployment problems.

2. Incomes

33. While Africa's population growth rate averaged 3 per cent per year in 1980-1986, per capita income declined at an annual average rate of 3.4 per cent. But, as noted earlier, real wages declined more rapidly than per capita income and had an average fall of 19 per cent between 1980 and 1986. Table 3 shows the trends in real minimum wages in some 28 countries. The declines were particularly severe in countries undertaking structural adjustment programmes including Gambia, Ghana (up to 1984), Guinea, Somalia, Sudan and the United Republic of Tanzania. Salaried and wage workers suffered a dramatic loss in the purchasing power of their earnings, but the impact was greatest on the lowest paid who could barely meet their food needs. For example, in Tanzania when the minimum wage was Tanzanian shillings 600 in 1981, the minimum food budget per month for an averae household of 4 persons was T. Shs. 900. By 1984 the minimum wage had been increased to T. Shs. 810 but the real purchasing power was less than T. Shs. 100. 33/ In Zambia in 1985 the minimum subsistence

budget, or poverty datum line, for a family of five was above Kwacha 300 a month which was almost twice the average wage. 34/ The minimum wage of Cedis 116 in Ghana in mid-1988 could not buy a tuber of yam, a local staple, and a chicken costing over Cedis 1,200 was more than a ninth of the monthly salary of a nurse. 35/ This is why nearly all classes of workers had to find informal ways of supplementing their incomes not only to meet their food requirements but also to pay the fees for health care and educational services demanded under the structural adjustment cost recovery schemes.

Table 3: Real minimum wages in selected African countries since 1975 (1980=100)

	1975	1980	1981	1982	1983	1984	1985	1986
Burkina Faso	87	100	92	105	97	92	86	89
Burundi	..	100	90	148	136	119	115	..
Cameroun	..	100	97	104	107	111	102	108
Central African Republic	83	100	87	76	77	64	59	..
Congo	157	100	85	76	70	67	64	61
Cote d'Ivoire	114	100	92	94	89	86	84	79
Ethiopia	..	100	94	89	89	82	73	77
Gabon	..	100	92	99	89	101	101	96
Gambia	..	100	94	98	89	73	65	..
Ghana	523	100	105	86	80	80	133	150
Guinea	115	100	91	87	79	71	64	..
Kenya	120	100	89	89	81	72	71	75
Liberia	..	100	93	88	85	84	85	83
Madagascar	..	100	90	81	68	68	65	64
Malawi	140	100	139	147	129	108	128	109
Mali	169	100	91	98	100	90	108	..
Mauritania	..	100	84	93	92	86	..	..
Mauritius	..	100	89	84	81	79	77	76
Niger	..	100	87	78	80	74	75	77
Nigeria	..	100	148	138	115	81	79	..
Rwanda	103	100	94	83	78	74	73	..
Senegal	112	100	99	91	94	84	78	74
Somalia	277	100	90	79	58	30	22	16
Sudan	137	100	80	64	49	47	45	..
Tanzania	195	100	99	77	61	60	45	36
Togo	131	100	84	83	76	78	80	77
Zambia	..	100	88	93	88	81	75	..
Zimbabwe	..	100	97	143	107	117	110	123

Source: ILO/JASPA, African Employment Report 1988, Chapter I, Table 5, p. 56.

34. Data on income distribution and measurements of income disparities are inadequate. Some evidence suggests that there has been a compression in the wage structure so that the differentials between the highest and lowest income earners in

the public sectors have decreased to some extent during the crisis in the 1980s. 36/ However, given the drastic declines in per capita income levels and the resultant increase in income competition among the rapidly growing labour force, income disparities and concentrations must still be quite nigh between the different socio-economic groups. Thus, it was not uncommon in the mid-1980s to find in some countries the top 20 per cent of the population earning 60 per cent of the total income and the very top 10 per cent appropriating 45 per cent. There are reported cases where the top 6 per cent of the population in one country received 34 per cent of the national income and the top 5 per cent in another couuntry appropriated over 43 per cent. 37/ Also, one estimate in 1985 showed that on the average the ratio of urban to rural incomes was 4:1 and the gap was widening in several countries.

35. It should be noted, however, that geographic income groups are not homogeneous. All urban areas contain poor, unskilled marginal workers with very low incomes, while many rural areas have rich commercial farmers. Thus, in Lesotho in 1980, the top 20 per cent of the rural households controlled 53 per cent of the allocated land while the bottom 40 per cent had only 6 per cent of the holdings. Forty-seven per cent of the households also had no livestock. 38/ An earlier survey of rural income distribution in Botswana had shown that in 1974/1975 some 5 per cent of the rural households owned 50 per cent of the national herd while some 45 per cent had no cattle at all. 39/ However, a significant aspect of the overall income situation in the rural areas is that the majority of households have low income opportunities due to the continued neglect of the so-called subsistence sector of agriculture and the low levels of public investments, productive assets and infrastructure in those areas. Despite the fast urbanization rate, Africa will remain a rural continent up to and beyond the year 2000. Therefore, given the relatively young demographic profile and high population growth and age dependency rates, rural incomes can remain structurally depressed for a long time unless definite political commitments are made towards rural transformation and the enhancement of the productive capacities of small farmers, pastoralists and poor rural workers, with particular attention to the women among them.

3. Poverty

36. It is generally acknowledged that the crisis and drought emergency of 1983-1985 as well as structural adjustment programmes have increased the incidence and prevalence of poverty in Africa. However, the identification of the poor is not easy since a socially meaningful definition of poverty must take into account the norms and values of particular societies and cultures. For this reason there is a need for continuous study to deepen understanding about the complex socio-cultural, political and economic causes and varieties of poverty, if poverty-alleviation strategies of Governments and communities are to be efffective. Despite the conceptual inadequacies, it is generally accepted

that poverty defines the condition of insufficient income or "exchange entitlements" 40/ of some people to meet their basic needs in food, clothing, shelter, health care, education, etc., and to live at a standard widely regarded as satisfactory within their society. Poverty therefore denotes a condition of deprivation and not just a state of inavailability of goods and services. It is thus linked to inequalities in access to and distribution of income, goods, services and productive resources.

37. A comprehensive analysis of poverty in Africa is not available. But it is evident that mass poverty is widespread and has deepened in this decade. Some of the important indicators are the worsened conditions of malnutrition, infant mortality, stunted growth of children and maternal morbidity and mortality. (see Section IV below). The poor whose plight requires the greatest attention include displaced victims of drought, natural disasters and war, small farmers and pastoralists, landless or unskilled rural workers, low-income urban wage earners and informal sector workers, and women heads of households who are among the poorest strata in the rural population. Some estimates indicate that some 50 to 75 Africans out of every 100 are currently living in poverty. 41/ The highest concentration of absolute poor are found in the rural areas, which is characteristic of the poverty phenomenon especially in the developing world. Thus, the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD) estimates that between 50 and 90 per cent of the total rural African population lives in absolute poverty. 42/ A recent study of the human situation in Africa's 27 LDCs concluded categorically that "the main social problem of African LDCs is one of poverty ... generally characterized by malnutrition, physical deficiencies, shortened life expectancy, fear and despair." 43/

38. The poor could not compete for income under structural adjustment trade liberalization or foreign exchange modifications which favoured well-to-do traders and speculators. 44/ Indeed, the export-oriented and outward-looking macro-economic adjustment policies were not designed to deal with the problems of Africa's poor. Those problems are profoundly structural and cannot be solved with short-term remedial welfare or relief consumption, as has often been perceived by the proponents of structural adjustment. Lacking adequate productive opportunities, capacities and assets, the rural and urban poor have borne the brunt of increasing prices in food, medicines, kerosene, transportation and other essential goods and services. Thus their vulnerability increased during the crisis and adjustment period not only as an immediate social issue but also as a profound developmental problem.

39. The response of African Governments and the international community to this human tragedy has been increasingly positive, especially as some measures are being undertaken under APPER and UN-PAAERD to resuscitate small-holder agriculture and promote efficient human resources development and utilization. 45/ To the same end, at least two ECA member States, Cote d'Ivoire and Ghana, have undertaken comprehensive National Living Standards

Surveys to identify the scope of the problems in order to plan long-term measures to alleviate poverty. However, as clearly stated in the Khartoum Declaration: Towards a Human-Focused Approach to Socio-Economic Recovery and Development in Africa 46/ in March 1988, poverty alleviation cannot be a selective remedial strategy. It must enhance the productive capacity of all the poor "through better access to productive resources and assets" and through their participation in all the decisions and programmes of development. The Declaration also stressed the conviction that "no nation can be great and prosperous if the majority of its people are poor, malnourished, illiterate, miserable and perpetually vulnerable". But much is required to translate this conviction into political commitment and actions to effect the necessary socio-economic transformation that would put Africa's poor majority at the centre of sustainable development as contributors and beneficiaries. The damages they have sustained in eroded health and human capital destruction make such actions extremely urgent.

IV. THE CRISIS IN FOOD, NUTRITION AND HEALTH

1. The Critical Situation in Food and Nutrition

40. The crisis of the eighties has left severe imprints on the lives of millions of African people and the long-term effects must be a subject of serious monitoring and study. The most compelling aspects are those associated with death, starvation, malnutrition and the massive dislocations of peoples. At the core of all these tragedies was the inaccessibility of the unfortunate people to nutritionally adequate food. Domestic food supply in Africa has suffered for more than a decade from imbalances between production levels and population growth rates, ecological constraints, backwardness in production, processing and storage techniques and misguided policies that de facto discriminate against local foods and their producers in favour of export-production of externally desired beverages (cocoa, coffee and tea), minerals and timber. Agricultural inputs, prices and incentives have not been gender or poverty sensitive with respect to the millions of poor, small food producers of whom about 80 per cent are women. In particular, women and poor small farmers are constrained in their access to land and credit. Also, their years of accumulated knowledge about the production of local staple crops such as millet, sorghum, cassava, yams, plantain and sweet potatoes are virtually ignored by modern agricultural scientists whose new techniques, if properly disseminated at all, find certain resistance for socio-cultural and poverty reasons.

41. The cumulative effect has been continuing food crises and rapidly diminishing food self-sufficiency ratios in the continent. ECA calculations show that the ratio dropped from 98 per cent in 1972-1974 to 86 per cent in 1980 and is projected to fall to 71 per cent by the year 2008. In 1980 each African had about 12 per cent less home-grown food than in 1960. By 1986 one out of every five Africans depended for his or her survival on food imports, about 25 per cent of which was provided by food aid. 47/ The massive food aid that came to Africa in the 1983-1985 drought emergency was a notable manifestation of human solidarity. The recurrent droughts, recent locust infestations and continuing civil wars and political conflicts have also made food aid a continuing necessity in many countries especially in the Sahel, the Horn and Southern Africa. The FAO has estimated that the food aid requirements of sub-Saharan Africa for 1987/88 are 4.6 million tons, an increase of more than 45 per cent from the previous year. 48/ It must also be noted that African countries are increasingly relying on food aid because their capacity to finance commercial food imports has become substantially reduced with the economic crisis, structural adjustment and mounting debt. In 1985 alone the food import bill for the region was $11.3 billion.

42. Food is so vital to the social and economic wellbeing of a people that no society should be so vulnerable in respect of this basic resource. However, it must be noted that the food and

nutritional insecurity in Africa is not simply a question of food scarcity in aggregate terms. Inadequate logistical capacity, poor communications especially between rural zones, socio-political biases and skewed patterns of distribution are important factors. Urbanization and urban-biased food import policies have influenced tastes and consumption patterns towards a growing preference for foreign foods. Ignorance and certain cultural practices and food habits contribute to problems of poor diet and undernourishment especially of children, pregnant and lactating women. But poverty must be regarded as the most critical factor in the food and nutritional insecurity of the vast majority of the African people. Food consumption has become inextricably linked to income and employment opportunities due to major social changes, including education and urbanization, that have taken place in Africa over the past several decades. As a result, the number of people who can produce all the food they need has decreased while the people who must buy their food requirements has increased. As the conditions of food production have deteriorated and devaluation and removal of food subsidies have forced prices up, both food-deficit farmers and the urban poor have faced seriously reduced nutritional standards. With their low purchasing power and exchange entitlements, they have been forced to reduce their food, particularly protein, consumption. Even then, many such poor households spend up to two-thirds of their income on food. Many endure chronic hunger and malnutrition despite their increasing efforts to engage in small trading, cottage industries and other non-farm activities.

43. Food aid has responded to the dire emergency needs of millions of affected people, especially the most vulnerable children and nursing mothers. In some cases food aid has been used to promote rehabilitation of infrastructure, generate income and protect food entitlements as has happened in food-for-work and cash-for-food programmes in several countries. But there are real concerns about the heavy reliance of African Governments on imported food in general and on food aid in particular. They undermine the chances of attaining food self-sufficiency and have deleterious effects on small food producers and on the food and nutrition security of the poor. Food aid undermines local food production by undercutting prices and enlarging exogenous tastes. Thus, it reinforces the misalignment between domestic tastes and local food production goals. For example, imported wheat and rice which are fast overtaking local staples such as millet, sorghum, cassava and sweet potatoes cannot be easily produced in adequate quantities because of ecological, technical and economic constraints, especially in sub-Saharan Africa.

44. Food aid can also be addictive and can be used to free recipient Governments from their urgent responsibilities to develop and support the productive capacities and enhance the entitlements of the poor especially in the rural areas. At present, nearly 90 per cent of food imports go to the socially powerful and vocal urban dwellers thus underscoring the socio-political dimensions of the food and nutrition problem. At

the same time, food aid deepens Africa's dependency in the world economic system while it enables donor countries to dispose of their food surpluses without depressing their own domestic markets and incurring the wrath of their powerful agricultural constituencies and lobbies. In this regard, it is instructive that Africa can receive large quantities of food relief transported and distributed at considerable cost but never enough assistance to acquire agricultural inputs or equipment and materials to rehabilitate health, water and educational facilities which are equally necessary for sustainable food and nutrition security and development. It is a measure of the distortions in the world political economy of food that a few industrialized countries spend some $50 billion in farming subsidies and surplus food storage payments while they provide less than $8 billion in agricultural assistance to countries with a high potential to increase their production. Thus, it has been pertinently observed that in Africa "it is often twice as expensive to bring one ton of once-and-for-all food relief to a remote rural family as to help it to produce its own food of the same amount annually over several years." 49/

45. The cumulative impact of the above conditions has been the increase in nutritional disorders among the African people. From 1972-1974 the number of severely hungry and undernourished people rose from 80 million to more than 150 million in 1984. Even before the drought emergency erupted in 1983, the trends in employment, incomes, food production and distribution were such that the United Nations estimated that 26 per cent of the African population was undernourished or malnourished and that Africa had replaced South East Asia as the region with the highest level of dietary deficiency. As high as 35 per cent of pre-school children in Africa suffered from acute protein energy deficiency or wasting compared to 16 per cent in Asia and 4 per cent in Latin America. 50/ The implications of such drastic conditions for the development of healthy people and their creative and productive capacities are stark.

46. This is why African Governments have made agriculture and particularly food production the first priority for the region's development strategy as articulated in the Lagos Plan of Action, APPER and UN-PAAERD. The region must move with determination from emergency food relief management and survival strategies to a new production approach which involves rural transformation and the enhancement of poor people's entitlements and meaningful participation in all aspects of development. In this regard, there are good indications that by 1988 more than 90 per cent of African countries were according the necessary high priority to food and agriculture. Some 60 per cent of them were allocating 20 to 25 per cent of their public investment to the sector, which is a remarkable improvement since 1982 when the regional average allocation was 7 per cent. 51/ As a specific illustration of the change, Zimbabwe doubled credit to small farmers from 17.4 per cent share in 1982/83 to 34.7 per cent share in 1985/86. It has also removed legal, pricing and procedural obstacles which

discriminated against women who are the majority of small producers. 52/ In another example, the Government of Cameroon, which has increased its budgetary allocation to agriculture from 23.7 per cent in 1981 to over 26 per cent in 1983, has supported a very successful rural development project emphasizing food production and well-targetted technical and financial interventions to promote the incomes and living standards of women and poor producers. 53/ Increases in producer prices for both export and domestic consumer crops in 1983-1986 have also been reported in countries such as Burundi, Cote d'Ivoire, Nigeria, Sierra Leone, the United Republic of Tanzania and Uganda where the effect has been the narrowing of the income gap between the average wage earner and farmer. 54/

2. The Critical Health Situation

47. The health sector has been one of the worst affected in Africa's social deterioration. Granted that there are serious limitations in aggregate national social statistics, there are still a number of sensitive indicators that reveal the poor and unsatisfactory health status of the people of the region and particular social groups. Life expectancy, though improving, is still the lowest in the world at 51 years. In 1985, 30 countries representing 60 per cent of the member States of ECA had a life expectancy at birth of less than 50 years. Only three of the Member States, namely, Mauritius, Sao Tome and Principe and Tunisia had a life expectancy at birth of more than 60 years. 55/ Although there have been moderate declines in recent years, mortality levels, especially for children, are quite high by world standards and in comparison with other developing regions (see Table 1). The deaths of children under 5 years reached most disturbing levels during the 1983-1985 emergency. The United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) recorded infant mortality rates (IMR) of 100-150 per 1000 live births in all but 13 ECA Member States. In 1984, 9 out of the 10 countries in the world with the highest under-five mortality rates (U5MR) of over 250 per 1000 live births were found in Africa. In 1985, 27 Member States had U5MR of between 178 and 304. 56/ Maternal mortality rates in Africa are also unacceptably high. In 1985 the region lost as many as 11 mothers per 1000 live births compared to 5 in Latin America. 57/

48. Most of the deaths of the children were caused by vaccine-preventable diseases such as neonatal tetanus, measles and whooping cough as well as diarrhoea and malnutrition. The maternal deaths were mostly caused by ignorance poverty and lack of access to necessary services. The incidence and prevalence of child killing or disabling diseases as well as vector-borne and sanitation-related diseases such as malaria, trypanosomiasis, onchocerciasis, and cholera seem to have been aggravated in the mid-1980s. Debilitating and endemic diseases which had been eliminated or brought under considerable control in the 1960s and 1970s re-emerged in several countries. They include malaria, yellow fever, yaws and worm infestations among primary school

children. By the end of 1987, moderate to severe epidemics of communicable diseases including cholera, meningitis, yellow fever and rift-valley fever had hit 32 African countries, including Mali, Mauritania, Nigeria, Sudan, United Republic of Tanzania, Uganda and Zaire. In some cases there were hundreds of fatalities. The terrible health situation in Southern Africa caused or aggravated by apartheid and destabilization policies will be analysed in Section VI below. With respect to Acquired Immunodeficiency Syndrome (AIDS), a total of 7338 AIDS cases had been reported in 36 countries by 1987. Most of the cases (96 per cent) were reported in 12 countries: 5 in Central Africa, 3 in East Africa, 2 in Southern Africa and 2 in West Africa. 58/

49. High levels of malnutrition in children led to the high mortality rates and considerable stunted growth in many countries undergoing structural adjustment in the early 1980s. On the average, 43 per cent of children under 5 years of age suffered from moderate to severe malnutrition. A survey of 19 countries showed that 14 per cent of children born in 1982-1983 were below normal weight (2.5 kg) at birth. In Ghana the proportion of children whose weight-for-age was below the Harvard standard was 47 per cent in 1983. In Kenya 28 per cent of rural children were reported to be physically stunted in 1982. 59/ Many of these indicators showed serious retrogressions from earlier achievements in the 1970s and reflected the deepening deprivation and poverty in the continent in the 1980s.

50. Some of the common diseases in Africa are associated with the unsatisfactory conditions of housing, water supply and sanitation facilities. The economic and ecological crisis as well as political conflicts have destroyed substantial shelter stock, especially in the rural areas, and reinforced the strong trends of rural-urban migration and rapid urbanization. Consequently, as noted earlier, cities have grown by leaps and bounds and the enormous pressure of demand for housing and ancillary facilities has frayed the urban fabric and plunged many cities into crises of unprecedented dimensions. For instance, in Ethiopia the Government estimates that annual urban housing requirements are 15 times the actual capacity. 60/ Services in capital cities are specially strained. For example, 10 African countries (Angola, Benin, Guinea, Kenya, Libyan Arab Jamahiriya Mozambique, Senegal, United Republic of Tanzania, Togo and Uganda) have 83 per cent of their urban population concentrated in their capitals. In another 13 countries at least one-third of the population live in a single city. 61/ The result is terrible overcrowding, with a substantial proportion of these urban residents living in densities of 4 to 7 persons per room. The majority of urban dwellers face acute shortages of rooming and apartment units. In 1981, before the crisis reached its climax, between 30 and 70 per cent of the urban population could not afford conventinal low-cost housing. 62/ The worsening situation has been manifested in the massive growth of inner city slums and unregulated buildings and habitations in periurban areas. Some estimates indicate that some 60 per cent of the urban population

now live in such deprived areas and poor housing. Markets and workplaces in such areas have particularly unhygienic environments.

51. The health and general quality of life of citizens in human settlements depend to a large extent on the levels and quality of water supply and sanitation facilities. In 1983, three years after the International Drinking Water Supply and Sanitation Decade (IDWSSD, 1981-1990) began, only 38 per cent of the African population was served by convenient water supply and about 29 per cent by sanitation facilities. Typically, the coverage was concentrated in the urban centres: some rural areas had less than 15 per cent service in drinking water and less than 5 per cent coverage in waste disposal facilities. Table 4 summarizes the situation in 1985 when the World Health Organization (WHO) made a mid-decade review of the IDWSSD. For 36 African countries for which data were reported, the distribution of the total population was 26 per cent urban and 74 per cent rural. However, 78 per cent of the urban dwellers had access to safe drinking water and 73 per cent had sanitation facilities. On the other hand, 75 per cent of the rural population had neither access to safe and adequate drinking water nor provision for sanitation. In any case, the exceptionally high rates of urban population growth, especially in the poorer urban zones, make it very unlikely that the percentage of service coverage will increase appreciably by 1990 or that the Decade goals can be achieved by most African countries. A further complication is that of financing. Domestic finances are scarce and international financing for these essential human and developmental needs is extremely limited. As an indication of the latter, the World Bank lending for water supply and sewerage projects in 1985-1987 was lowest in Sub-Saharan Africa at 9.8 per cent compared with 15.4, 16.4 and 17.1 per cent for South Asia, East Asia and the Pacific, and Latin America and the Carribbean, respectively. 63/ Most of the loans were for urban services since the long-deprived rural areas have limited scope for bankable projects in conventional cost-benefit terms.

Table 4. Water Supply and Sanitation coverage for 36 African countries, 1985
(population in thousands)

	Population surveyed		Water Supply		Sanitation	
	'000	%	Population served	%	Population served	%
Urban	98 032	26	74 336	78	37 305	73
Rural	278 537	74	68 096	25	33 855	25

Source: ECA, Key Issues, Concerns, re Implementation of the Mar del Plata Action Plan in Africa (E/ECA/CM.14/10), February 1988, p. 5, Table 2. (Data from WHO sources)

52. Financial constraints and the skewed and unequal patterns of distribution of social services constitute major problems in the attainment in Africa of the objectives of the United Nations Declaration on Social Progress and Development. Health care resources and facilities in nearly all countries are inadequate and have deteriorated during the crisis of the eighties. Fragmentary evidence shows some slight improvements in the ratios of physician to population and nurse to population which were 1:23,000 and 1:2,400 respectively in 1981. But there is no necessary correspondence between such improved ratios of physicians, nurses and hospital beds to populations and the enhanced well-being or life expectancy of the majority of the people unless there are adequate supplies of essential drugs, equipment and logistic support as well as substantial improvements in income levels and distribution patterns. In the majority of cases 60 to 70 per cent of physicians work in urban areas where only 20 per cent of the population live. In one case, 60 per cent of all doctors in 1985 were concentrated in the capital city which had only 20 per cent of the hospital beds. 44/ The health care systems are urban biased, largely hospital-based and overwhelmingly oriented to curative rather than preventive measures. As such, the hospital facilities absorb over 60 per cent of the health budget of most countries and serve the needs mostly of the socially and economically powerful. This aggravates existing social inequalities. For some 39 countries for which data are available only 30 to 50 per cent of the populations were covered by health services.

53. For the majority of the people the most effective approach would seem to be primary health care (PHC) with its strong orientation to equity, community participation and low-cost but effective health technologies. The WHO has estimated that to achieve health for all Africans by the year 2000, the additional annual per capita expenditure would be $16.20 if the conventional hospital system is used but only $2.60 if the PHC approach is adopted. 45/ By 1987 some 41 countries were at various stages of

implementing PHC at district level but all faced shortages of human, material and financial resources. Economic recession, external indebtedness, heavy debt service burdens and structural adjustment rigidities have forced nearly all Governments to impose drastic and disproportionate cuts on their social sector budgets, especially for health and education. Already, public expenditures on health in Africa were the lowest in the world, with some countries allocating as little as 1-2 per cent of their national budgets to the sector. The expenditure cuts affected more imported drugs, supplies, equipment, transport and other operating costs than manpower. Therefore, existing health facilities have been rendered even more ineffective. For example, per capita health expenditure in Kenya fell by 24 per cent between 1980 and 1985. In Ghana the fall was 80 per cent from 1974 to 1982. Liberia's allocation for drugs fell by 35 per cent from the 1981/1982 fiscal year to 1982/1983. In Sudan the share of the social services in current expenditure plunged from 31 per cent in 1980 to 18 per cent in 1984. In Madagascar, Senegal and Somalia per capita social expenditure fell by 44, 48 and 62 per cent respectively between 1980 and 1986. 66/ For the region as a whole the share of health and education in recurrent government expenditures which stood at 25.2 per cent in 1986 declined to 23.1 per cent in 1987 and was expected to fall further to 19 per cent in 1988. 67/

54. The consequences of the social sector cuts in non-labour costs and introduction of cost recovery which the majority of the people with low purchasing power could ill-afford have been the worsening of the health status of the poor and vulnerable, more than one-third decline in clinic attendance, decay of health infrastructure, demoralization of health personnel and a catastrophic exodus of doctors and other qualified health manpower from the continent. Clearly, African Governments facing natural and financial droughts must make difficult choices, but priorities and political will are of utmost importance. Good health status and the social well-being of the majority of the population do not flow automatically from economic growth. A determined social policy that insists on the primary and central position of the human being in development is required to attack the fundamental distortions and wastage manifested in mass poverty, poor health and illiteracy. Some recent studies have shown how the right priorities and appropriate social policies are attempting to reverse certain aspects of the social deteriortion. For example, among the poorest African LDCs, Mauritania's per capita income of $470 is nearly twice that of the United Republic of Tanzania at $290 or that of Togo at $230, but the latter two countries have some of the lowest mortality rates. Sierra Leone's per capita income of $320 is 2.1 times that of Burkina Faso at $150 but the former had the lowest life expectancy at birth of 36 years and the highest infant mortality rate of 171 per 1000 live births among the African LDCs in 1986. 68/ On the other hand, in the midst of the drought emergency in 1984 Burkina Faso mounted an immunization campaign against three of the country's major diseases, yellow fever, meningitis and measles,

at minimal per capita cost and through the use of community action. As a result 70 per cent of the nation's children under 14 years were protected. The momentum has been extended to the provision of community health workers for all 7,500 villages in a programme of "one village one health post". Senegal, another LDC, used community mobilization and traditional communications networks and political leadership to raise its level of full child immunization from 10 per cent in 1985 to nearly 70 per cent in 1988. 69/

55. Some non-LDC countries have also taken notable measures of social action. After its war of independence, Zimbabwe reduced its recurrent expenditure for defence and administration from 44 per cent in 1980 to 28 per cent in 1984 while increasing the share of preventive health care from 7.6 per cent to 14 per cent of the overall health budget which itself had increased in real terms by 13 per cent between 1983 and 1984 in spite of structural adjustment. 70/ In another case, Algeria made spending cuts in all ministries in 1987/1988 except the Ministry of Health. However, hospital spending has been deliberately held back while the country is undertaking a major community health campaign in immunization, oral rehydration therapy (ORT) and clean water supply to every family. The targets are full clean water supply by the end of 1988, 50 per cent reduction of child death and saving of the lives of 40,000 children a year through immunization before the end of 1989 and universal knowledge of ORT by the end of 1990. In its current national development plan, 1985-1989, Algeria made the social sector only second to industry in budgetary allocation. Total investment for housing, health education and leisure was raised from 18.4 per cent in 1980-1984 to 32 per cent of total government expenditure compared to 38 per cent share for industry. Similarly, Egypt has mounted campaigns in ORT and immunization which had cut its massive diarrhoeal dehydration child death rate of 100,000 per year to 50 per cent and was expected to reach 80 per cent full immunization of children before the end of 1988. 71/

56. Improvements in the African social situation, economic productivity and the attainment of sustainable development depend critically on the nutrition, health, educational enlightenment and, as appropriate, productive employment of children, women, and the poor. Children who are "wasted" and miss the one-in-a-life chance of developing their brains and bodies before the age of 5, cannot attain their full human potential in adulthood. As UNICEF puts it: "sacrificing the growth of today's children for the growth of tomorrow's economy makes neither economic sense nor human sense" 72/. The physical and mental damage done to hundreds of thousands of Africa's children, adult women and men, especially in the rural and poor urban areas, by long-standing hunger and malnutrition, poverty and unequal development, economic crisis, drought and adjustment policies represent a massive loss in investments and a tragic burden for the future. Accordingly, there is an urgent need for rethinking health development in Africa particularly in its preventive and

intersector aspects. There must be a framework of integrated social and economic planning in which human welfare priorities and concerns of equity, participation and efficiency are carefully weighed. It is noteworthy that several regional efforts are being made in this regard. The 1987 OAU Declaration on Health as a Foundation for Development in Africa and the "Bamako Initiative" to promote primary health care through community level self-financing mechanisms of procurement and management of the distribution of essential drugs with particular benefit for women and children may be mentioned. Also, the ECA and WHO have consolidated their collaboration and established a Joint ECA/WHO (AFRO) Technical Group to consider and advise on relevant intersectoral policies and strategies. The African Development Bank has recently increased its cooperation with WHO and is allocating 15 per cent of its fifth replenishment of $2.5 billion to the African Development Fund to health and educational development in Africa for 1988-1990. 13/

V. DECELERATION IN EDUCATION AND LITERACY

57. Education became one of the halmarks of social progress of African independance from the 1960s when total school enrolments grew faster in Sub-Saharan Africa than in any other developing region. From 1960 to 1976 the annual average growth rates for all levels were 6.2 per cent compared with 5.9 for Latin America and 4.2 per cent for Asia. The primary school population increased from 36 to 63 per cent of the age group; the secondary from 3 to 13 per cent; and the number of university students grew from virtually zero to one per cent. 14/ There was also a remarkable growth in adult literacy which rose from a very low level of 9 per cent in 1960 to 40 per cent in 1982. In 1960 only one country, Mauritius, had an adult literacy rate of more than 50 per cent. By 1986, the region as a whole had reached that benchmark, with 21 countries exceeding that rate. These were Algeria (52 %), Ghana (55 %) Cameroon (57%), Tunisia (57%), Uganda (59%), Sao Tome and Principe (61%), Kenya (63%), Zaire (63%), Congo (64%), Ethiopia (64%), Gabon (65%), Seychelles (68%), Swaziland (69%), Libya Arab jamahiriya (71%), Madagascar (71%), Lesotho (75%), Botswana (76%), Zimbabwe (76%), Zambia (78%), United Republic of Tanzania (83) and Mauritius (84%). 15/

58. Trends in enrolment were also very positive between 1970 and 1980 when Africa maintained high annual rates of growth of 7.3 per cent for the primary, 11.9 per cent for the secondary and 13.1 per cent for the university levels. The share of girls and women in total enrolment increased at all levels from 1960 to 1980. Their enrolment ratios went up from 24.5 to 53.2 per cent at the primary, 11.3 to 34.1 per cent at the secondary and 0.3 per cent to 5.3 per cent at the university levels. 16/ However, the proportion of girls and women in overall post-primary education was and is still quite low, considering that females constitute little more than half of the regions population.

59. African Governments made heavy overall investments in education allocating an average of 20-30 per cent share of their national budgets to the sector. From 1975 to 1980, regional per capita expenditure for education rose from $18 to $41. There was a tremendous expansion of schools and educational facilities in nearly all countries before 1980. Besides strong political pressures from the top in the early post-independence period to develop and accelerate education, there was conviction in the universally accepted view that eduction, training and functional literacy prepare young people and adults to realize their potential, gain social and economic mobility and generally assume useful roles in society. Education in all its forms was a major element in human capital stock formation and Africa made notable progress in that regard.

60. Unfortunately, the formal educational systems inherited from the colonial regimes had certain fundamental weaknesses and problems which militated against many of the socially desired goals, and the independent nations found it very difficult to

change them. To begin with, the systems became very elitist and extremely costly the higher up one went on the ladder from primary school to university. Social inequalities were perpetrated by concentrating the bulk of secondary and higher institutions of learning in urban centres where they received better resource endowments and allocations. Then there was the very serious problem of the relevance of the content of education to the cultures and the world of work in Africa. There was, and still is in many instances, a high foreign content and orientation in the curricula which made them irrelevant if not injurious to the critical concerns of Africa's cultural identity and self-reliant, self-sustaining development. The colonial emphasis on producing clerks, subordinate administrators and teachers and the early post-independence stress on leadership and bureaucratic training, led most countries to concentrate on the humanities, arts, bible knowledge and a few behavioural sciences where the employment demand was easily saturated. There was not sufficient emphasis on scientific, agronomic, medical and technical education which is so crucial for the mastery of the difficult African environment and the production of food and other outputs to meet the basic needs of the fast growing populations.

61. The above weaknesses resulted in a situation where the ensuing benefits from education did not prove commensurate with the enormous investments made in the two decades before 1980. There is considerable wastage manifested in the high levels of educated unemployed lawyers and arts men and women, the brain-drain and continuing high illiteracy rates among disadvantaged women and rural dwellers, despite their numerical strength and overwhelming contributions to the economic development of the region. The social inequalities and elitism embedded in the educational systems are also sources of social and political conflicts. Traditionally, it had been the few privileged higher educated, sometimes from particular ethnic groups or geographical zones, who had captured political and bureaucratic leadership and appropriated certain social benefits inaccessible to other segments of society.

62. This system of privilege had been bolstered by the investment patterns. As higher educational institutions were nearly all residential and heavily subsidized, the average annual cost per student in higher education in 1974, for example, was $2,941 compared with $50.4 for a pupil at the primary level. That is, for the cost of each higher student nearly 60 children, whose families could probably ill-afford the cost, could have gone to primary school. 17/ By 1985 the first level of education accounted for 77.9 per cent of total enrolment, the secondary for 20.4 per cent and the tertiary for only 1.7 per cent. But in Kenya, for example, government expenditure per student per year in secondary and tertiary education was, respectively, 6 and 85 times higher than in primary education 18/ In Ghana, the Government estimated in 1987 that for every student in secondary school and university, 4 and 120 children, respectively, could be educated in primary school. 19/ Donor agencies have helped to

reinforce the inequalities and disproportionate educational investments. Thus, in 1983 most bilateral donors spent less than 4 per cent of their assistance on primary education and over 42 per cent on higher education. On a per capita basis, they spent only $1.10 per primary school pupil and some $575 per higher level student. 80/

63. By 1980 several countries had recognized the existing and emerging problems in the educational system and were undertaking steps to reform both its structure and content to make them correspond better to the needs of the people. But the economic crisis and structural adjustment requirements put a brake on the momentum both of educational reform and expansion and caused a rapid deceleration and deterioration. Despite the strong demographic pressure and high increases in the school age population, the annual growth in the total number of students fell from 8.1 per cent in 1970-1980 to 3.9 per cent in 1980-1987. The decline was sharpest at the primary level where the annual growth rate plunged from 7.3 per cent to 2.6 per cent in the same periods. The corresponding percentages for the secondary level were from 11.9 to 8.5 and for the university level from 13.1 to 7.7 per cent. There was also a steeper decline in the growth of primary schools, for which the population pressure was greatest, than in secondary and university institutions. Non-formal education and literacy programmes also stagnated or declined. Table 5 shows the slow rate of growth in literacy in the continent as a whole, despite the dramatic successes achieved by 40 per cent of the countries as noted earlier. By 1986 some of the poorest LDCs including Benin, Burkina Faso, Chad, Gambia, Mali and Somalia had literacy rates ranging between 6 and 16 per cent.

Table 5: Literacy rate (percentage)

Subregion	Both sexes		Males		Females	
	1982	1986	1982	1986	1982	1986
North Africa	39	44	52	59	27	30
West Africa	31	38	43	50	21	31
Central Africa	47	57	64	69	33	44
East and southern Africa	48	63	59	74	37	49
Total Africa	40	50	53	61	29	39

Source: ECA Statistical Data Base.

64. Budgetary retrenchment under the crisis and structural adjustment led to a sharp decline in regional per capita expenditure from $41 in 1980 to $28 in 1985. The most severe cuts were made in capital expenditures and recurrent expenditures for books, paper, supplies, furniture, equipment for the science laboratories which had started to increase in the late 1970s, and

for repair and maintenance. Many educational institutions underwent decay and the cost of their rehabilitation has become prohibitive for many countries. Cost recovery schemes were imposed on parents and guardians who had to pay for hitherto subsidized textbooks, supplies, food and even school furniture. With the very high increases in the prices of consumer items, many children of poor and low-income families were forced to go without the essential supplies. Some poor children were also withdrawn from school to help generate incomes in diverse ways for their impoverished families. Female children appear to have suffered more in this situation. The results were socially disastrous as well as demoralizing for parents, teachers and students especially in the rural areas. Many frustrated teachers whose salaries were undercut by devaluation, inflation and high consumer prices left their countries. Thus, Ghana lost some 4000 and Zaire some 7000 teachers in the early 1980s.

65. The quality of education declined as many graduates at all levels came out poorly prepared to improve their own lives or contribute productively to the development of their societies. The retrogression and wastage of the potential of children were reflected in the fact that 40 per cent of school age children did not attend primary school in 1984 compared with 30 per cent in 1980. Drop-out rates increased, especially among girls, and world wide, Africa had the highest attrition rates in primary schools from 1982. Repetition of classes by children was also high, ranging from 20 to 30 per cent in some countries including Angola, Burundi, Cameroon, Chad, Congo, Gabon, Guinea-bissau and Togo. Factors identified for such poor performance included poverty, malnutrition, ill-health and poor school infrastructure. 31/

66. Educational reform to improve the quality and efficient utilization of trained human resources as well as the equitable distribution of educational opportunities remain some of the most difficult challenges facing African Governments today. This is why the urgent necessity to plan and reconstruct the human resources base has been emphasized in the Lagos Plan of Action and made one of the four critical priorities of APPER and UN-PAAERD. Some countries including Ghana have undertaken educational reform programmes as part of their overall economic recovery and structural adjustment programmes. These involve restructuring and diversification of the existing systems and the provision of special grants for the poor and heavy community involvement and contributions to increase access to education for disadvantaged groups.

67. An evaluation of the implementation of APPER and UN-PAAERD in 1987-1988 showed that some 60 per cent of the countries surveyed had begun to take action to reorient their educational systems to the needs of development; 83 per cent were increasing their efforts in mass literacy and adult functional education and some 70 per cent had devised special programmes to assist small farmers, women and youth. 32/ It is recognized that if the

majority of the people are left illiterate or poorly educated, their absorption capacities for modern development ideas and technologies would be limited. Efforts at employment promotion, some of which were noted under Section III, have aimed at reducing educational disenchantment and the dependence on outside expertise. However, few positive results have been registered so far in attempts to reverse the brain-drain because of the continuing socio-economic uncertainties and political conditions are also urgent to enhance the chances of democratisation and the ability of the people, particularly the disadvantaged, to claim and defend their lawful rights in their societies."

VI. THE SOCIAL IMPACT OF APARTHEID, DESTABILIZATION AND REGIONAL CONFLICTS

1. The impact of Apartheid and destabilization policies

68. The 1985 Report on the world Social Situation noted that "apartheid constitutes, in the contemporary world, the extreme form of racism and racial discrimination, in that a complete system of rules and society is based on it". 83/ It has been condemned by the General Assembly of the United Nations as a crime against humanity and vigorously castigated by the Organization of African Unity. The apartheid system is based on violence and repression which destroys lives and disrupts normal social and economic development not only of the majority black people in the Republic of South Africa but extends boldly and unconscionably to Namibia and 9 neighbouring and front-line African States in Southern Africa.

69. Apartheid and the destabilization policies of the South African regime has thus turned Southern Africa into a most vulnerable zone of conflict and war with grave social, economic and political consequences. To the enormous losses in human lives destroyed in war, prisons or exile, must be added the economic costs of war damage to production and infrastructure, extra defence spending and the support to growing numbers of refugees, widows and orphans. Recent estimates for such losses for 9 affected Member States (Angola, Botswana, Lesotho, Malawi, Mozambique, Swaziland, United Republic of Tanzania, Zambia and Zimbabwe) for the period 1980 to 1986 are $25-30 billion or the equivalent of the total production of the Southern African region in 1985. The extra defence costs imposed on the recurrent budgets of the affected Governments include $1,250 million for Angola or 25 per cent of that LDC country's GDP, $60 million for Botswana, $250-$275 million for Mozambique (also an LDC losing 12 per cent of its GDP), $125-$150 million for Zambia and $500 million for Zimbabwe.84/

70. The above tremendous costs are debilitating to the fragile economies of the countries. But the costs in human misery are equally appalling. Apartheid harassment and repression force continuous streams of refugees to flee from South Africa and Namibia and their relations left behind do not live in any peace. All women, except white women, in South Africa and Namibia suffer the greatest constitutional, economic, social and cultural repression and bear enormous social burdens under Apartheid. 85/ Some 3 million male migrant workers from independent African States exist under atrocious and socially repressive conditions in labour camps and settlements. As part of its destabilization policies, South Africa either expels or threatens to expel hundreds of such workers from time to time only to compound the problems of unemployment in such countries as Botswana, Lesotho, Mozambique and Swaziland. This contributed to the very large number of 13.5 million unemployed persons recorded in East and

Southern Africa in 1987, the highest in all the subregions of Africa.

71. The armed conflicts in Angola and Mozambique which involve directly or indirectly the Apartheid regime have caused serious difficulties in food production and supply, displaced millions of people and dangerously strained the socio-cultural fabric of the societies. In Mozambique 100,000 people were estimated to have been killed by the Mozambique National Resistance between 1975 and 1988. Children have been the most helpless victims. In 1986 alone 140,000 children were estimated to have died in Angola and Mozambique as a direct or indirect result of war and destabilization. More than 200,000 Mozambican children have also been orphaned, abandoned or in some way traumatized by the conflicts. Besides, these human damages, substantial health and educational infrastructure in the two countries have been destroyed. Over 40 per cent of primary schools and rural health posts in Mozambique have been destroyed since 1982, and nearly one-third have been wrecked or abandoned. Thus, millions of children and adults have been denied access to basic education and health services. Malnutrition and diarhoea in Angola and Mozambique have reached alarming levels but medical and technical assistance is thwarted by the wars and inadequate funds. Consequently, the death rate of children under 5 years has reached a record 325 per 1,000 in both countries. 8a/

2. Regional Conflicts

72. The precarious social situation in Africa has been further aggravated by political conflicts and tensions arising from the tenuous state of democracy and socio-cultural homogeneity within the States as well as disputes over ex-colonial, problem-ridden boundaries between States. Most African countries are characterized by the pluralistic nature of their societies, urban bias in their development policies and political subordination and marginalization of women and rural communities in general. The major aspects of the development process including decision-making, planning and the distribution of benefits are highly centralized and rarely democratic. The participation of the people and accountability of power and authority are also very weak in the modern political structures. Under such circumstances, social consensus is difficult to achieve and minor disputes have a tendency to degenerate into conflicts especially where power and ethnic interests are involved. The pervasive nature of poverty and language barriers which lead to mutual ethnic suspicions also fuel many conflicts in the region.

73. Arising from such causes, Africa has witnessed many intermittent and some continuous conflicts within and between individual Member States. All subregions have been affected in recent times but the most serious conflicts have occurred in Central, East, North, Southern and West Africa. About one-third of the countries have experienced political strife in the last decade. The recurring or continuous conflicts in the Horn have

had particularly devastating effects on human lives and national economies. The conditions of political instability have also contributed to the brain-drain and are at the root of the very considerable refugee problem.

74. The social fabric of societies has been rent, family and household units broken-up, food production and distribution disrupted and limited health services directed to treating the war injured or maimed. Again the basic needs of children, women and the poor suffer most. Military engagements in the region reflect a breakdown of social order and create more social problems with the deaths and displacement of people. Since most of the wars and conflicts occur in rural zones where the people are powerless to intervene, the destruction of farm lands, crops, livestock and human settlements often constitute irreparable losses for the poor owners. Regional political conflicts also seriously infringe the human rights of many affeced citizens. Finally, regional conflicts and their attendant military expenditures divert scarce financial resources to socially non-productive ends and deny sectors like health, education and social services badly needed resources. It has been rare in the period of crisis and adjustment austerity for Governments to trim their defence budgets even though the silent wars and emergencies of poverty, hunger, malnutrition, poor health and literacy are more dangerous to the well-being of their peoples.

3. Refugees and Displaced Persons

75. Refugees in Africa, now numbering some 4 million , have been some of the worst victims of apartheid, destabilization and regional political conflicts. Their situation worsened in the first half of the 1980s when their number was even higher at 5 million or half the world's total. The problem of displaced persons is often, though not primarily, caused by political conflicts. Their numbers are a little more difficult to estimate since they stay within their national boundaries. But there may be as many as 10 million in the region whose plight is still unresolved.

76. The influxes and concentrations of both refugee and displaced persons are highest in the Horn of Africa, Central, East and Southern Africa. Most of them live in rural areas of LDCs where resources and development opportunities are already limited. For example, according to the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), by the middle of 1988, Angola had 95, 660 Namibian, South African and Zairean refugees; Ethiopia had 700,000 Somalis and Sudanese; Somalia had 840,000 refugees mainly Ethiopians; Sudan had 753,000 Chadians, Ethiopians, Ugandans and Zaireans and the United Republic of Tanzania had 266,200 refugees mainly from Burundi, Rwanda and Zaire.

77. While African countries under the leadership of the OAU and the United Nations system and international community under the

leadership of the UNCHR have undertaken continuous efforts to relieve the immediate hardships of refugees and displaced persons and to find permanent solutions to their plight, a major responsibility lies with individual African Member States to find viable solutions to their internal social and political problems which lie at the root of this regional human tragedy. Inestimable costs are sustained by all affected countries whose scarce resources must be used to support the survival of thousands of people who could otherwise be creative and productive for their own societies, and enhance the overall social situation of the continent. With regard to apartheid nothing short of its total eradication can remove the human travesty. Africa's recovery and socioeconomic transformation urgently require peace and stability and the role of the international community in this cannot be underestimated.

VII CONCLUSIONS

78. The 1980s have seen a reversal of many trends towards social advancement in Africa, hence the weakening of the implementation of the Declaration on Social Progress and Development. Social conditions deteriorated in most countries and substantial gains made in health, education, employment and social integration in the first decade and a half of independence were either lost or seriously eroded. By the mid-1980s there was a threat of complete systemic breakdown of the social and economic order of the continent when economic recession and an unprecedented drought emergency shook the fragile foundations of most countries. Distorted patterns of social development and distribution were further aggravated when famine, hunger and malnutrition decimated populations. Mass poverty became even more generalized and unemployment and underemployment increased. The social frustrations and misery were intensified in many countries where Governments adopted stringent financial stabilization and structural adjustment measures to restore some macro-economic balances. The neglect of the human dimension in these measures caused an intolerable deterioration in the human capital stock of the region which had been so painfully built up in the early years of independence.

79. The above review of the critical social situation in Africa has highlighted some major aspects and given indicative examples from a few countries to illustrate the issues. The serious and intolerable social situation requires immediate attention by all African Governments and the international community as ECOSOC resolution 1987/39 has appealed for. While short-term measures would be necessary to relieve the immediate hardships of many poor families and communities in food, health care and incomes, the basic problems are structural and embedded in policy misorientations. Therefore, they require fundamental long-term solutions that would transform the socio-political as well as economic structures. Since the problems outlined in this paper are interrelated, their solutions must be found in an integrated framework of social and economic planning in which the needs of the majority of the people, including women and the poor, would be of central concern. There must be a rethinking about social development so that its vital developmental aspects are highlighted in planning. This is a call that has been made in the Khartoum Declaration. The urgent implementation of that Declaration will go a long way to reconstruct Africa's social order.

80. Although difficult to achieve, a holistic approach towards socio-economic transformation in Africa must be made an unflinching long-term goal. It would require a new development ethos which would not only place all people at the centre of development, as contributors and beneficiaries, and ensure their equitable participation and social justice in an increasingly democratic process. It would also mean a fundamental changes towards internally-oriented development policies and strategies

so that internal, rather than external, demands, resources and capacities would be the driving force for development.

Notes

1/ General Assembly resolution 2542(XXIV).

2/ ECA, The African Social Situation, 1982-1987, E/ECA/CM.14/16, March 1988

3/ A/S-11/14, Annex I.

4/ DAU/ECM/2XV/Rev.2, E/ECA/ECM.1/1/Rev.2, March 1986

5/ Ibid., p. 5

6/ Figures in these paragraphs, unless otherwise indicated, are derived from ECA, Beyond Recovery: ECA-Revised Perspectives of Africa's Development, 1988-2008, E/ECA/CM.14/31), March 1988; United Nations, Critical Economic situation in Africa: United Nations Programme of Action for African Economic Recovery and Development 1986-1990 (A/43/500)

7/ See ILO/Jobs and Skills Programme for Africa (JASPA), Recent Trends in Employment, Equity and Poverty in African Countries, document submitted to the International Conference on the Human Dimension of Africa's Economic Recovery and Development, Khartoum, Sudan, 5-8 March 1988; also, ILO/JASPA, African Employment Report 1988 (Addis Ababa, 1988)

8/ For the origins of the misconception and slowly changing perceptions in Africa see ECA, Social policies and Programmes in the Context of Africa's Economic Recovery and Accelerated Development (ECA/SD/87/2.1/a), report submitted to the United Nations Inter-regional Consultation on Development Social Welfare Policies and Programmes, Vienna, 7-15 September 1987

9/ See ECA, Report of the Scientific Round Table on the Climatic Situation and Drought in Africa (E/ECA/CM.10/23), March 1984; United Nations, Critical Economic Situation in Africa: Special memorandum on Africa's Economic and Social Crisis, E/1984/110; FAO, African Agriculture: The Next 25 Years, Synthesis Report (Rome, 1986), p. 10

10/ United Nations, World Population Trends and Policies: 1987 Monitoring Report (New York, 1988), Table 15, p.33

11/ ILO/JASPA, African Employment ..., p. 6

12/ See E/ECA/CM.10/14 Annex II

13/ See ECA, The Implications of Structural Adjustment and Stabilization Programmes on Long-term Growth and Development in African Least Developed Countries E/ECA/LDCs. 7/Exp. 6/4, March 1987; ECA, The Development and Utilization of Human Resources: The

Case of the African Least Developed Countries, E/ECA/LDCs/Exp.7/4, April 1988

14/ See S.C. Nana-Sinkam "Problems of Macro-Economic Stabilisation and/or Structural Adjustment Policies in Africa: The Fate of the Poor and the Rural Sector during Adjustment Transition," Rural Progress (UNECA), vol. VII, No. 2, 1988, pp. 4-21; Tony Hodges, "Structural Adjustment Reports from the Field: Ghana's Strategy for Adjustment with Growth", Africa Recovery, vol. 2, No. 3 (August 1988), pp. 16-20, 27

15/ ILO/JASPA, African Employment...., pp. 14-17

16/ See A/43/500, Section V, B.2; Tony Killick, "Africa's Commodity Dilemma", Africa Recovery, Vol. 2, No. 3 (August 1988), pp. 5-7

17/ See summary of the report in African Recovery, vol. 2, No. 3 (August 1988), p. 9

18/ OAU, African Common Position on Africa's External Debt Crisis, adopted by the 3rd Extra-ordinary Session of the Assembly of Heads of State and Government of the Organization of African Unity, 30th November-1st December 1987 (Nairobi, 1987), p. 9.

19/ Tony Hodges, "Senegal: Nine Years of Adjustment", Africa Recovery, op.cit., pp. 22-26

20/ Tony Hodges, "Structural Adjustment Reports from the Field: Ghana's Strategy for Adjustment with Growth", op. cit., pp. 19-20, 27

21/ For an up to date and comprehensive analysis of the trends in Sub-Saharan Africa, See ILO/JASPA, African Employment..., Chapter I.

22/ ECA, Beyond Recovery...., p. 115

23/ Ibid., p. 23

24 Idriss Jazairy, "How to Make Africa Self-sufficient in Food", Development, SID Special Issue on Africai Recovery and Development, 1987: 2/3, p. 51

25/ ILO/JASPA, African Employment..., pp. 18-21; also ILO/JASPA, Impact of Recession in African Countries: Effects on the Poor, Synthesis Report (Addis Ababa, 1985), pp. 74-75

26/ ILO/JASPA, African Employment..., p. 20

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